



PARCC ITEM DEVELOPMENT PROCUREMENT SUMMARY

PARTNERSHIP FOR ASSESSMENT OF READINESS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREERS

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is an alliance of 24 states working together to develop a common set of K-12 assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics, anchored in what it takes to be ready for college and careers. The CCSS call on students to have not only solid content knowledge but also the skills to apply their knowledge in ways demanded by colleges, careers and citizenship in the 21st century. Measuring the full breadth of the CCSS will require new kinds of tests – tests that measure what matters for students’ futures. Moving to such an assessment system will require re-imagining assessments as we know them.

The next-generation assessment system envisioned by PARCC will have several benefits not found in many current assessment systems, including benefits to: **students**, who will know if they are on track to graduate ready for college and careers; **teachers**, who will have access to regular results to guide learning and instruction; **parents**, who will have clear and timely information about the progress of their children; **states**, which will have valid results that are comparable across the 24 member states; and **the nation**, since the assessments are based on the college- and career-ready, internationally-benchmarked CCSS.

THE PARCC ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The PARCC states are working together to build a shared assessment system that will be ready for use statewide in all PARCC states in 2014-15. This assessment system will include the following components:

- **Diagnostic assessments in reading, writing and mathematics.** These optional diagnostic assessments will be available for teachers to use throughout the year and will be designed to pinpoint students’ strengths and weaknesses relative to key areas of the Common Core State Standards.
- **Mid-year assessments in ELA/literacy and mathematics.** These optional assessments will be performance-based and will focus on difficult-to-assess standards; they will be designed to inform decisions about curriculum, instruction and professional development.
- **Performance-based assessments in ELA/literacy and mathematics.** This rich, performance-based assessment is a required component of the assessment system. It will be administered as close to the end of the school year as possible, and the results will be factored into a student’s assessment score. In ELA/literacy, it will focus on writing effectively when analyzing text; in mathematics, priorities will include focusing on the application of concepts, skills and understandings.
- **End-of-year assessments in ELA/literacy and mathematics.** For all grades and subjects, this component will be administered at the end of the school year and will include innovative, computer-based machine-scorable questions.
 - **In Grades 3-8**, the end-of-year assessments will focus on reading and comprehending complex texts in ELA/literacy and mathematics.
 - **In High School:** PARCC will create a series of End-of-Course (EOC) assessments in high school mathematics and End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments for ELA/literacy.
- **Speaking and listening component (ELA/literacy only).** This component will assess students’ speaking and listening proficiency using a tool that can be administered anytime during the academic year.

At each grade-level, the **PARCC ELA/literacy assessments** will allow students, parents, and educators to know whether students can:

- **Independently read and comprehend a range of complex texts.** Texts will include literature, literary nonfiction, and informational texts from several disciplines (e.g., history/social studies, science, and technical subjects). The assessment will also measure students' ability to apply vocabulary knowledge to assist them in comprehending what they read.
- **Write effectively when using and/or analyzing sources.** Students will read and comprehend a complex text, draw evidence from it in support of logical conclusions, and present a clear and coherent analysis of those conclusions (through explanation or argument) in writing.
- **Build and present knowledge through research and the integration, comparison, and synthesis of ideas.** The PARCC assessment will require students to integrate relevant, credible information from multiple print and media sources in response to a specific question or prompt, and produce a coherent account of or take and defend a position on the subject under investigation.

The PARCC **mathematics assessments** will determine the extent to which students are college- and career-ready or on track in mathematics by measuring:

- Whether they have **mastered the key big ideas** for each grade-level identified in the Common Core State Standards, and
- Whether they can **apply those knowledge and skills** to solve meaningful and novel problems.

Questions on the PARCC assessments will measure student learning *within* and *across* various mathematical domains and practices. The questions will cover the full range of mathematics, including conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and application and problem solving. Mathematical understanding, procedural skill and the ability to apply what one knows are equally important and can be assessed using the kinds of rich mathematical tasks envisioned by PARCC.

STUDENT ACCESS

Attending to the unique assessment needs of students with disabilities and English learners is a priority in PARCC item development. PARCC items will adhere to Universal Design principles, and supports embedded in the assessments will be incorporated from the initial stages of development, instead of being retrofitted after the items are written. PARCC contractors will be required to adhere to key principles for designing accessible assessments:

- Minimize or eliminate features of the assessment that are irrelevant to what is being measured, so that all students can more accurately demonstrate their knowledge and skills;
- Measure the full range of complexity of the CCSS;
- Design each component of the assessment in a manner that allows English learners and students with disabilities to demonstrate what they know and can do;
- Use Universal Design to create accessible assessments throughout every stage and component of the assessment; and
- Use technology to make all components of the assessment as accessible as possible.

PROCURING SERVICES TO SUPPORT PARCC ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT

Through PARCC's fiscal agent state of Florida, PARCC released this procurement solicitation – an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) – to select contractor(s) that will help the consortium develop items, tasks and related assessment materials for PARCC's mid-year, performance-based, and end-of-year assessments components in ELA/literacy and mathematics. This procurement will generate a large bank of materials to support the development of the PARCC assessments that will be administered in all member states in 2014-15. This ITN

represents a major milestone in PARCC's work, and a critical step towards on-time delivery of the PARCC assessments.

The ITN also includes in-depth information about PARCC's assessment design and articulates PARCC's vision for next generation assessments that are computer-based, aligned to CCSS, and designed to determine the extent to which students are college- and career-ready or on-track. The ITN calls for a range of innovations designed to ensure that the PARCC assessments address high priority objectives for the states: identifying whether students are college- and career-ready (or on-track in earlier grades), measuring the full range of knowledge and skills in the CCSS (and not just what is easiest to measure on a test), measuring the knowledge and skills of all students and providing them with opportunities to show what they know and can do, determining how much growth students and schools make towards college and career readiness from year-to-year, providing data throughout the year to help educators make improvements to curriculum and instruction, and providing information policymakers and the public can use to determine how well schools are educating children.

Future PARCC procurements will build on this work to help the consortium select contractors for the piloting and field testing of the items developed through this procurement, the building of test forms, the development of both the diagnostic and speaking and listening components of the PARCC assessment system, and development of guidelines and policies for accessibility and accommodations for students with disabilities and English learners.

Through this procurement, the PARCC states are pushing for innovation in several key areas:

- A procurement strategy that ensures competition among vendors doesn't stop when the contract is awarded.
- A cutting-edge approach building assessments that allows educators and policymakers to make well-reasoned and well-supported claims about student performance.
- Assessment tasks that use technology to promote student access and engagement, to allow for authentic and direct measures of what students know and can do, and to reduce the cost of assessment.
- An assessment design that addresses important college- and career-ready content and skills such as developing written arguments based on multiple sources of information and applying mathematical concepts to solve model real-world problems and to express mathematical arguments.
- A process for PARCC to review items that will involve key stakeholders and ensure that the assessments are free of bias, sensitive to the needs of various student groups including students with disabilities and English learners, well-aligned to the CCSS, and error free.

NEXT STEPS

- The ITN evaluation committee will begin evaluating proposals in February 2012 and will determine which respondents will move on to the negotiation phase with PARCC in late February/early March.
- The ITN negotiation team will meet with prospective vendors for the negotiation phase in March 2012.
- PARCC anticipates that contracts will be awarded in April 2012 and that development will begin immediately.
- Future procurements to help build the PARCC assessments will be released later in 2012 and 2013.